

Dan Jurafsky and James Martin  
Speech and Language Processing

## Chapter 6: Vector Semantics

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# What do words mean?

First thought: look in a dictionary

<http://www.oed.com/>

# Words, Lemmas, Senses, Definitions

lemma

sense

definition

pepper, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** BRIT. /'pepə/, U.S. /'pepər/

**Forms:** OE **peopor** (*rare*), OE **pipcer** (transmission error), OE **pipor**, OE **pinur** (*rare*).

**Frequency (in current use):**

**Etymology:** A borrowing from Latin. **Etymon:** Latin *piper*.

< classical Latin *piper*, a loanword < Indo-Aryan (as is ancient Greek *πίπερι*); compare Sar

**I. The spice or the plant.**

**1.**

**a.** A hot pungent spice derived from the prepared fruits (peppercorns) of the pepper plant, *Piper nigrum* (see sense 2a), used from early times to season food, either whole or ground to powder (often in association with salt). Also (locally, chiefly with distinguishing word): a similar spice derived from the fruits of certain other species of the genus *Piper*; the fruits themselves.

The ground spice from *Piper nigrum* comes in two forms, the more pungent *black pepper*, produced from black peppercorns, and the milder *white pepper*, produced from white peppercorns: see **BLACK adj.** and **n.** Special uses 5a, **PEPPERCORN n.** 1a, and **WHITE adj.** and **n.**<sup>1</sup> Special uses 7b(a).

**2.**

**a.** The plant *Piper nigrum* (family Piperaceae), a climbing shrub indigenous to South Asia and also cultivated elsewhere in the tropics, which has alternate stalked entire leaves, with pendulous spikes of small green flowers opposite the leaves, succeeded by small berries turning red when ripe. Also more widely: any plant of the genus *Piper* or the family Piperaceae.

**b.** Usu. with distinguishing word: any of numerous plants of other families having hot pungent fruits or leaves which resemble pepper (1a) in taste and in some cases are used as a substitute for it.

**c.** U.S. The California pepper tree, *Schinus molle*. Cf. **PEPPER TREE n.**

**3.** Any of various forms of capsicum, esp. *Capsicum annuum* var. *annuum*. Originally (chiefly with distinguishing word): any variety of the *C. annuum* Longum group, with elongated fruits having a hot, pungent taste, the source of cayenne, chilli powder, paprika, etc., or of the perennial *C. frutescens*, the source of Tabasco sauce. Now frequently (more fully **sweet pepper**): any variety of the *C. annuum* Grossum group, with large, bell-shaped or apple-shaped, mild-flavoured fruits, usually ripening to red, orange, or yellow and eaten raw in salads or cooked as a vegetable. Also: the fruit of any of these capsicums.

Sweet peppers are often used in their green immature state (more fully **green pepper**), but some new varieties remain green when ripe.

# Lemma pepper

Sense 1: spice from pepper plant

Sense 2: the pepper plant itself

Sense 3: another similar plant (Jamaican pepper)

Sense 4: another plant with peppercorns (California pepper)

Sense 5: *capsicum* (i.e. chili, paprika, bell pepper, etc)

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A sense or “concept” is the  
meaning component of a word

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There are relations between  
senses

# Relation: Synonymy

Synonyms have the same meaning in some or all contexts.

- filbert / hazelnut
- couch / sofa
- big / large
- automobile / car
- vomit / throw up
- Water / H<sub>2</sub>O

# Relation: Synonymy

Note that there are probably no examples of perfect synonymy.

- Even if many aspects of meaning are identical
- Still may not preserve the acceptability based on notions of politeness, slang, register, genre, etc.

## The Linguistic Principle of Contrast:

- Difference in form -> difference in meaning



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# Relation: Synonymy?

Water/H<sub>2</sub>O

Big/large

Brave/courageous

# Relation: Antonymy

Senses that are opposites with respect to one feature of meaning

Otherwise, they are very similar!

dark/light	short/long	fast/slow	rise/fall
hot/cold	up/down		in/out

More formally: antonyms can

- define a binary opposition
  - or be at opposite ends of a scale
- long/short, fast/slow
- Be *reversives*:
  - rise/fall, up/down

# Relation: Similarity

Words with similar meanings. Not synonyms, but sharing some element of meaning

car, bicycle

cow, horse

# Ask humans how similar 2 words are

word1	word2	similarity
vanish	disappear	9.8
behave	obey	7.3
belief	impression	5.95
muscle	bone	3.65
modest	flexible	0.98
hole	agreement	0.3

SimLex-999 dataset (Hill et al., 2015)

# Relation: Word relatedness

Also called "word association"

Words be related in any way, perhaps via a semantic frame or field

- car, bicycle: **similar**
- car, gasoline: **related**, not similar

# Semantic field

Words that

- cover a particular semantic domain
- bear structured relations with each other.

## **hospitals**

*surgeon, scalpel, nurse, anaesthetic, hospital*

## **restaurants**

*waiter, menu, plate, food, menu, chef),*

## **houses**

*door, roof, kitchen, family, bed*

# Relation: Superordinate/ subordinate

One sense is a **subordinate** of another if the first sense is more specific, denoting a subclass of the other

- *car* is a subordinate of *vehicle*
- *mango* is a subordinate of *fruit*

Conversely **superordinate**

- *vehicle* is a superordinate of *car*
- *fruit* is a superordinate of *mango*

<b>Superordinate</b>	vehicle	fruit	furniture
<b>Subordinate</b>	car	mango	chair

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# These levels are not symmetric

One level of category is  
distinguished from the others

The "basic level"



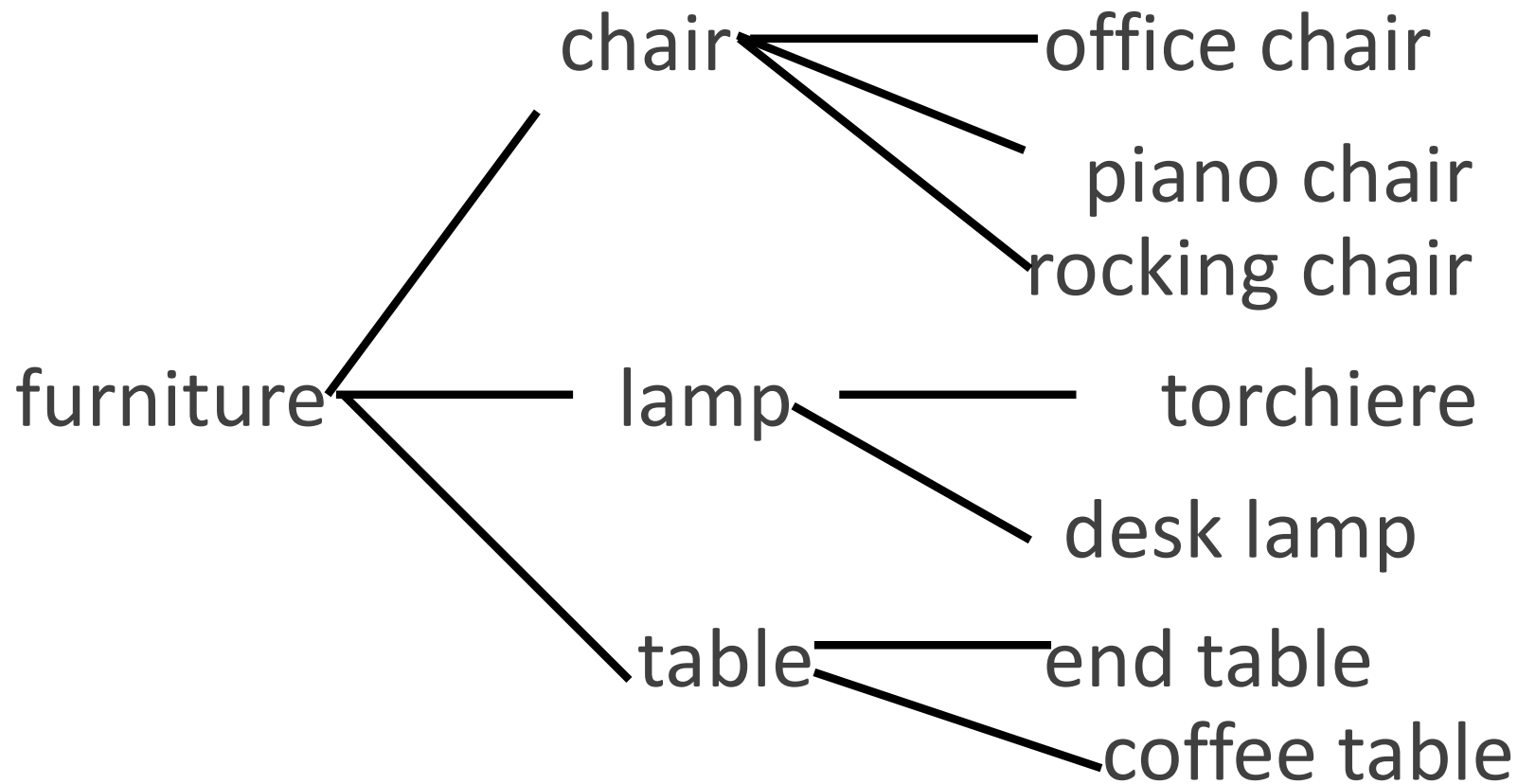
Name these items



**Superordinate**

**Basic**

**Subordinate**



# Cluster of Interactional Properties

Basic level things are “human-sized”

Consider chairs

- We know how to interact with a chair (sitting)
- Not so clear for superordinate categories like furniture
  - “Imagine a furniture without thinking of a bed/table/chair/specific basic-level category”

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# The basic level

Is the level of distinctive actions

Is the level which is learned earliest and at which things are first named

It is the level at which names are shortest and used most frequently

# Connotation

Words have **affective** meanings

positive connotations (*happy*)

negative connotations (*sad*)

positive evaluation (*great, love*)

negative evaluation (*terrible, hate*).

# So far

## **Concepts** or word senses

- Have a complex many-to-many association with **words** (homonymy, multiple senses)

## Have relations with each other

- Synonymy
- Antonymy
- Similarity
- Relatedness
- Superordinate/subordinate
- Connotation

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But how to define a concept?

# Classical (“Aristotelian”) Theory of Concepts

The meaning of a word:

a concept defined by **necessary** and **sufficient** conditions

A **necessary** condition for being an X is a condition C that X must satisfy in order for it to be an X.

- If not C, then not X
- “Having four sides” is necessary to be a square.

A **sufficient** condition for being an X is condition such that if something satisfies condition C, then it must be an X.

- If and only if C, then X
- The following necessary conditions, jointly, are sufficient to be a square
  - x has (exactly) four sides
  - each of x's sides is straight
  - x is a closed figure
  - x lies in a plane
  - each of x's sides is equal in length to each of the others
  - each of x's interior angles is equal to the others (right angles)
  - the sides of x are joined at their ends

Example  
from  
Norman  
Swartz,  
SFU

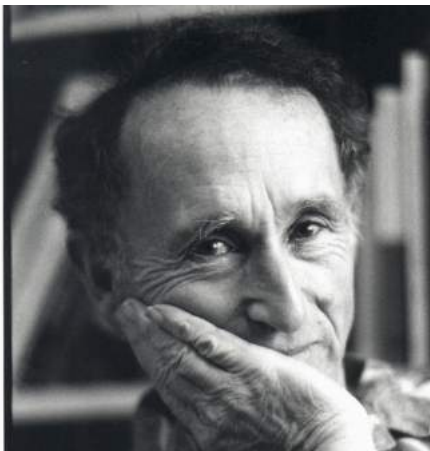


# Problem 1: The features are complex and may be context-dependent

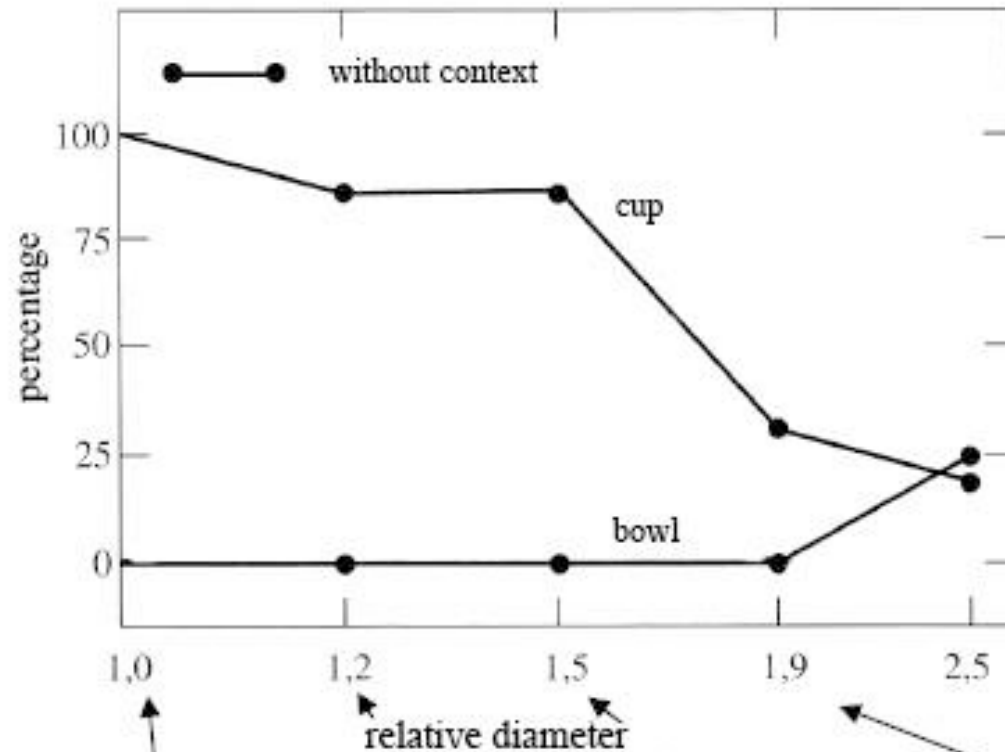
William Labov. 1975

What are these?

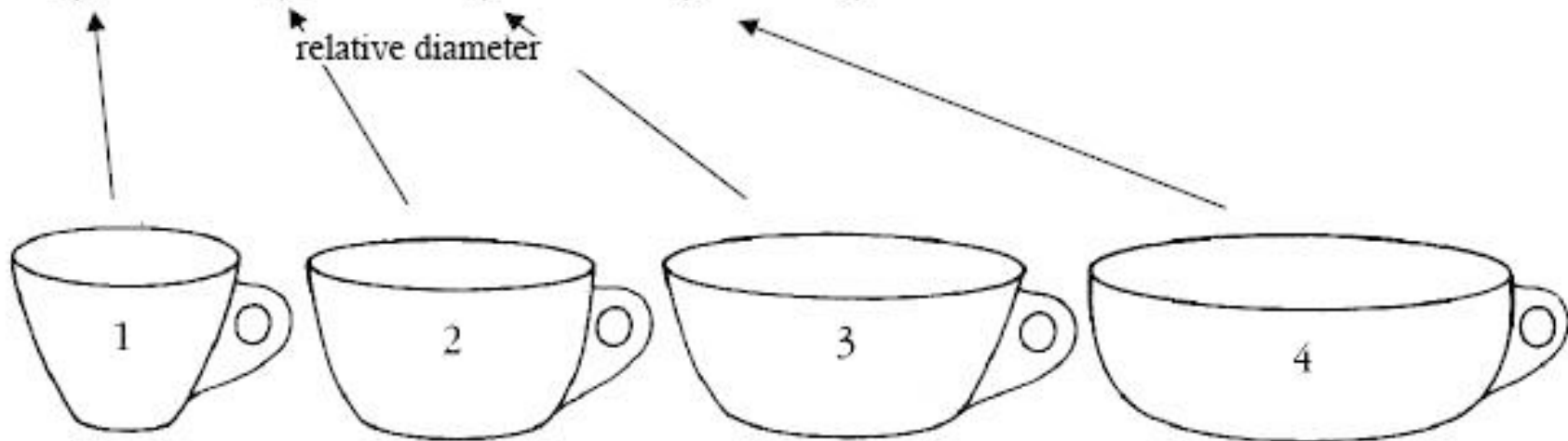
Cup or bowl?



# The category depends on complex features of the object (diameter, etc)

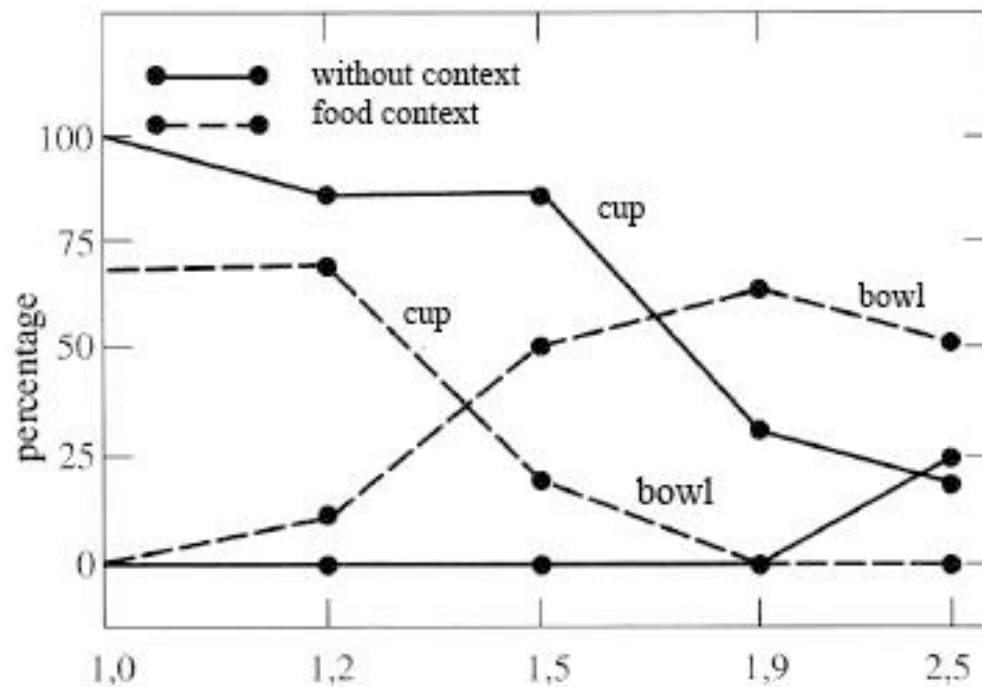


Where does the category „cup“ end?

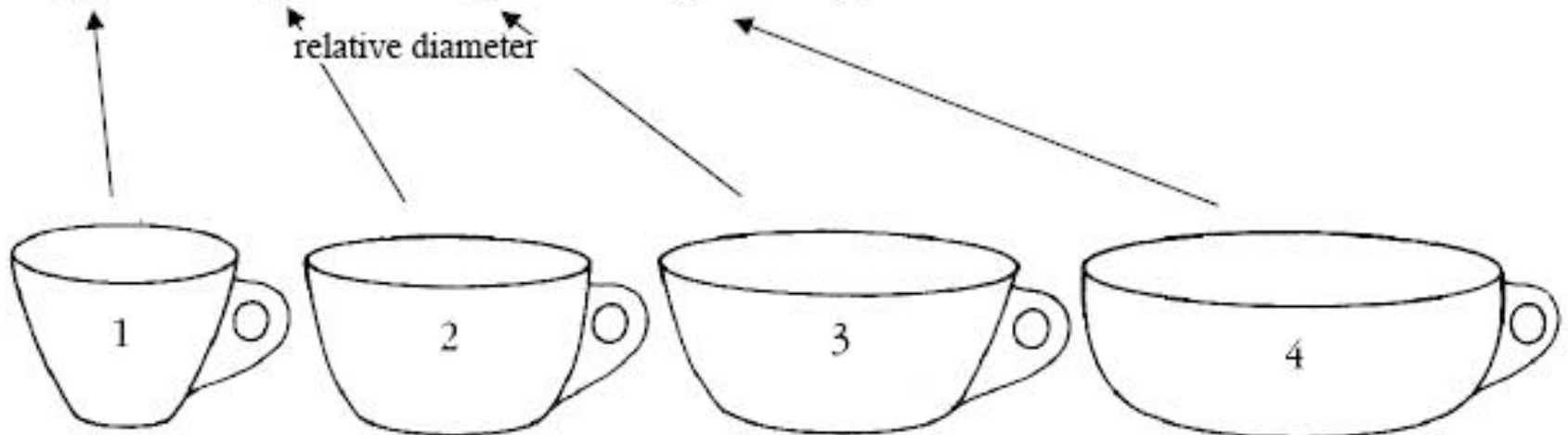


# The category depends on the context!

(If there is food in it, it's a bowl)



Boundaries between  
cups and bowls  
are context sensitive



# Labov's definition of cup

The term *cup* is used to denote round containers with a ratio of depth to width of  $1 \pm r$  where  $r \leq r_b$ , and  $r_b = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 + \dots + \alpha_n$  and  $\alpha_i$  is a positive quality when the feature  $i$  is present and 0 otherwise.

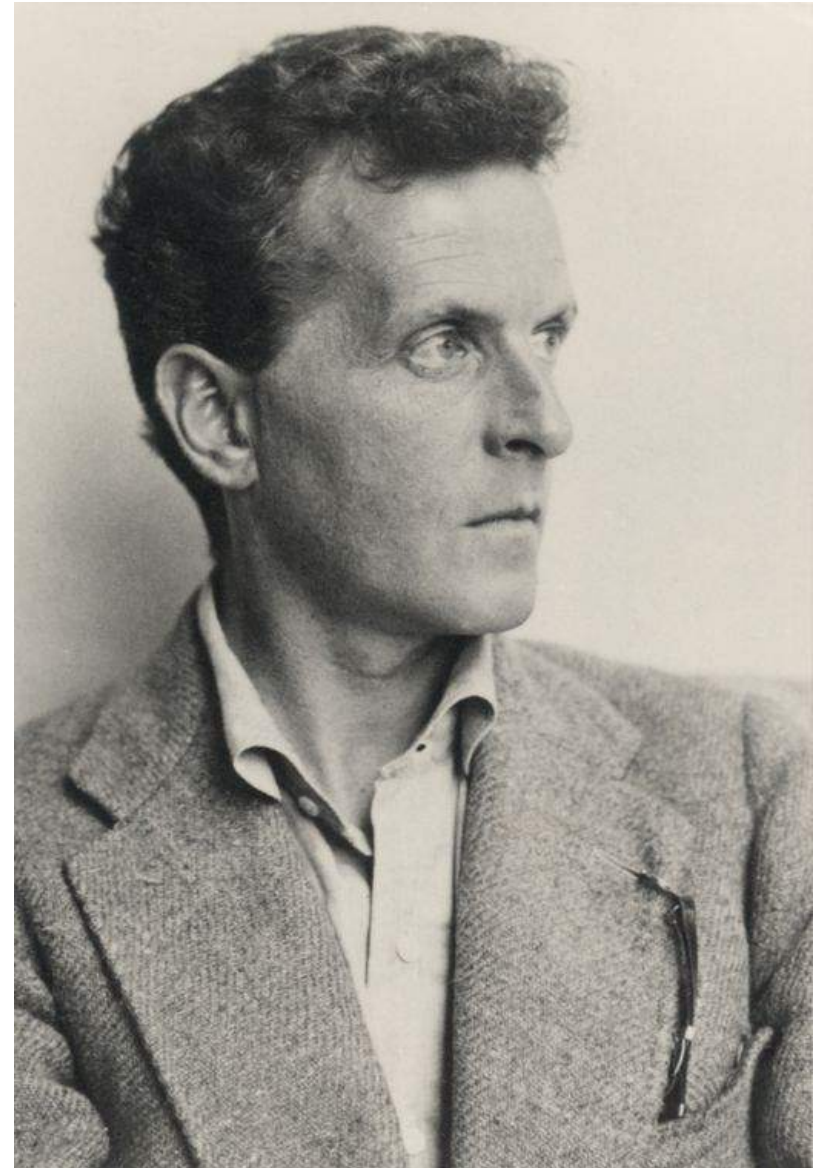
- feature
- 1 = with one handle
  - 2 = made of opaque vitreous material
  - 3 = used for consumption of food
  - 4 = used for the consumption of liquid food
  - 5 = used for consumption of hot liquid food
  - 6 = with a saucer
  - 7 = tapering
  - 8 = circular in cross-section

*Cup* is used variably to denote such containers with ratios width to depth  $1 \pm r$  where  $r_b \leq r \leq r_1$  with a probability of  $r_1 - r / r_1 - r_b$ . The quantity  $1 \pm r_b$  expresses the distance from the modal value of width to height.

# Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)

Philosopher of  
language

In his late years, a  
proponent of studying  
“ordinary language”





# Wittgenstein (1945)

## *Philosophical Investigations.*

### Paragraphs 66,67

66. Consider for example the proceedings that we call “games”. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don’t say: “There *must* be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’”—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look!—Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—Are they all ‘amusing’? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.

67. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than “family resemblances”; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family.

And for instance the kinds of number form a family in the same way. Why do we call something a “number”? Well, perhaps because it has a—direct—relationship with several things that have hitherto been called number; and this can be said to give it an indirect relationship to other things we call the same name. And we extend our concept of number as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.

But if someone wished to say: “There is something common to all these constructions—namely the disjunction of all their common properties”—I should reply: Now you are only playing with words. One might as well say: “Something runs through the whole thread—namely the continuous overlapping of those fibres”.

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What is a game?

# Wittgenstein's thought experiment on "What is a game":

PI #66:

"Don't say "there must be something common, or they would not be called `games'" —but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all"

Is it amusing?

Is there competition?

Is there long-term strategy?

Is skill required?

Must luck play a role?

Are there cards?

Is there a ball?



# Family Resemblance

Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4
ABC	BCD	ACD	ABD

“each item has at least one, and probably several, elements in common with one or more items, but no, or few, elements are common to all items” Rosch and Mervis

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How about a radically different  
approach?

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# Ludwig Wittgenstein

PI #43:

"The meaning of a word is its use in the language"

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# Let's define words by their usages

In particular, words are defined by their environments (the words around them)

**Zellig Harris (1954): If A and B have almost identical environments we say that they are synonyms.**

# What does ongchoi mean?

Suppose you see these sentences:

- Ong choi is delicious **sautéed with garlic**.
- Ong choi is superb **over rice**
- Ong choi **leaves** with salty sauces

And you've also seen these:

- ...spinach **sautéed with garlic over rice**
- Chard stems and **leaves** are **delicious**
- Collard greens and other **salty** leafy greens

Conclusion:

- Ongchoi is a leafy green like spinach, chard, or collard greens

# Ong choy: *Ipomoea aquatica* "Water Spinach"



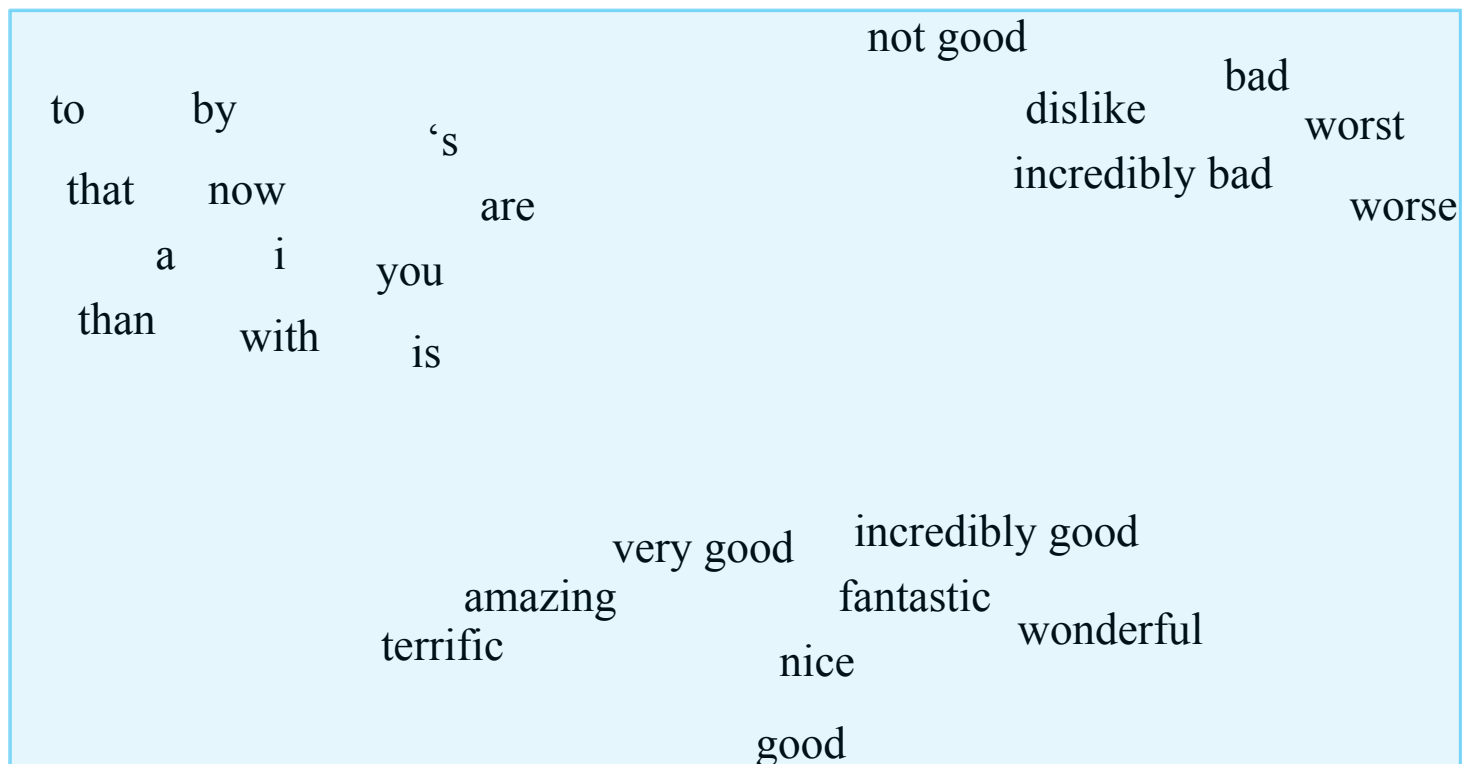
Yamaguchi, Wikimedia Commons, public domain

# We'll build a new model of meaning focusing on similarity

## Each word = a vector

- Not just "word" or word45.

## Similar words are "nearby in space"



# We define a word as a vector

Called an "embedding" because it's embedded into a space

The standard way to represent meaning in NLP

Fine-grained model of meaning for similarity

- NLP tasks like sentiment analysis
  - With words, requires **same** word to be in training and test
  - With embeddings: ok if **similar** words occurred!!!
- Question answering, conversational agents, etc




# We'll introduce 2 kinds of embeddings

## Tf-idf

- A common baseline model
- Sparse vectors
- Words are represented by a simple function of the counts of nearby words

## Word2vec

- Dense vectors
- Representation is created by training a classifier to distinguish nearby and far-away words

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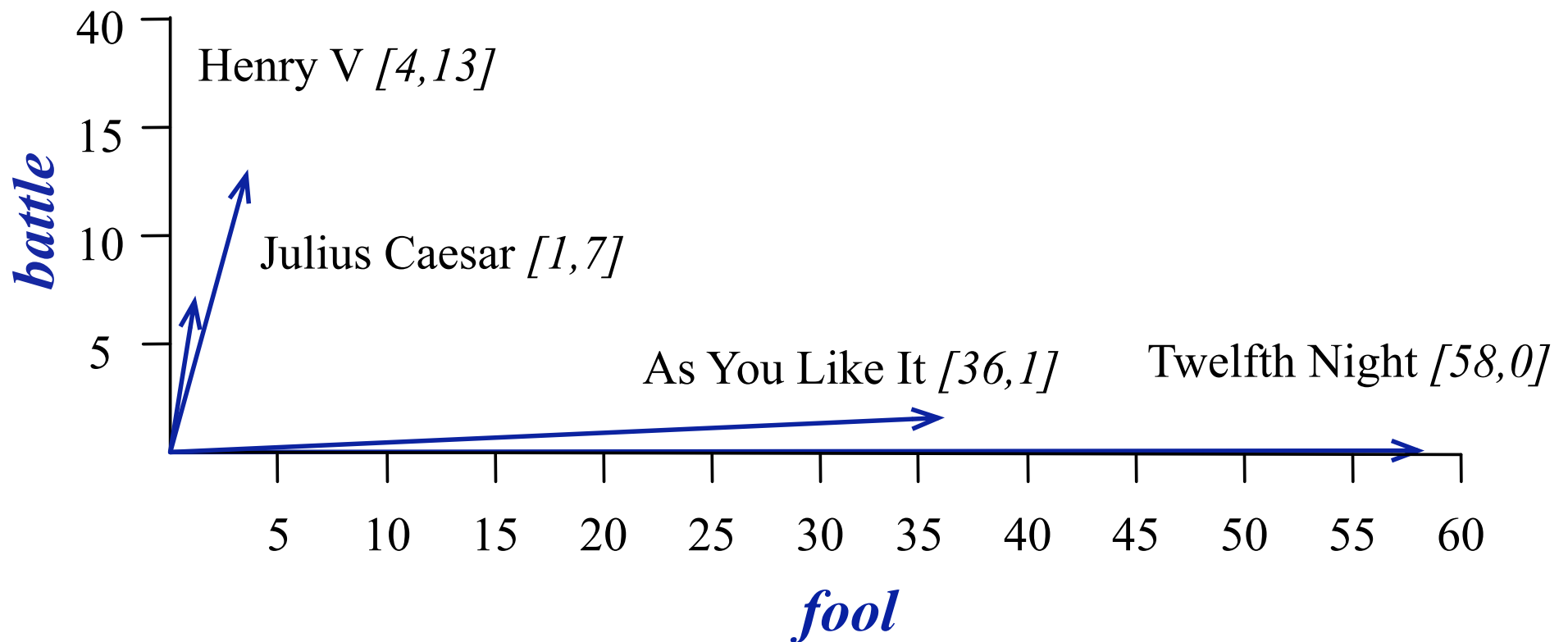
# Review: words, vectors, and co-occurrence matrices

# Term-document matrix

Each document is represented by a vector of words

	As You Like It	Twelfth Night	Julius Caesar	Henry V
battle	1	0	7	13
good	114	80	62	89
fool	36	58	1	4
wit	20	15	2	3

# Visualizing document vectors



# Vectors are the basis of information retrieval

	As You Like It	Twelfth Night	Julius Caesar	Henry V
battle	1	0	7	13
good	114	80	62	89
fool	36	58	1	4
wit	20	15	2	3

Vectors are similar for the two comedies  
Different than the history

Comedies have more fools and wit and fewer battles.

# Words can be vectors too

	As You Like It	Twelfth Night	Julius Caesar	Henry V
<b>battle</b>	1	0	7	13
<b>good</b>	114	80	62	89
<b>fool</b>	36	58	1	4
<b>wit</b>	20	15	2	3

*battle* is "the kind of word that occurs in Julius Caesar and Henry V"

*fool* is "the kind of word that occurs in comedies, especially Twelfth Night"

# Summary for Part I

- Survey of Lexical Semantics
  - Idea of Embeddings: Represent a word as a function of its distribution with other words
  - Tf-idf
  - Cosines
  - PPMI
- 
- Next lecture: sparse embeddings, word2vec